

**WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Instructional Facilitators (IF) Program**

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AUTHORITY

House Bill 139, 2006
W.S. 21-13-335, Senate File 70, Reauthorized 2012

HISTORY

During the 2006 legislative session, the Wyoming Legislature established House Bill 139 to assist schools with providing ongoing instructional coaching and mentoring, which led to the creation of the Instructional Facilitators (IF) program. This bill was the result of extensive research, including a study from Picus and Odden (2005). The research team identified Instructional Facilitators as a critical component of the most effective professional development by providing a systematic, ongoing, and school-wide approach to improvement.

W. S. 21-13-335, Senate File 70 (2012) reauthorized financial assistance for Instructional Facilitators and instructional coaches as a supplemental resource for school district professional development programs which required districts to provide documentation of the following program components:

- Evidence of a research-based approach to instructional facilitator program implementation.
- A plan for evaluation of the instructional facilitator program over time.

Since the inception of the Instructional Facilitator program, much has been learned about the roles and responsibilities of Instructional Facilitators. Of note, Instructional Facilitators:

- Can have profound impacts on the professional practice of teachers and overall improvement of instruction.
- Have evolved into the role of data analyst.
- Have a different role in elementary schools versus secondary schools.

During the Recalibration Committee meeting in August 2015, additional information was requested from the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) to assist in the consideration of how the IF program should look going forward. Specifically, the committee would like to know how districts are administering the IF program and how grant funds are being utilized.

A review of the Instructional Facilitator (IF) program began in the spring of 2015 with the hiring of a new program manager. The purpose was to gain understanding of the functionality and processes of the IF program. Discussions on tightening processes began within WDE regarding verification of IFs meeting the requirements outlined in W.S. 21-13-335.

CONTEXT

The review initiated by the new IF program manager in the spring of 2015 yielded these findings:

- Approximately 20% of all reported IFs do not meet the qualifications required in W.S. 21-13-335.
- There are discrepancies in what is submitted through the application process and what is reported in the staffing collection at the WDE.
- The state allocated funding for 270.29 FTE in 2014-15, and districts employed 249.68 FTE, 20.61 fewer than allocated, using various sources of funding.
- To supplement mentorship for teachers, 12 districts partially utilized district- and school-level administrators in IF positions.
- Of the 48 districts, 26 were allocated funding for less than one-half (0.5) FTE; four (4) districts were allocated funds for 0.0, 0.21, 0.28, and 0.32 FTE.

USE OF FUNDS

In, 2011, Leslie Rush and Suzanne Young published an article: Wyoming's Instructional Facilitator Program: Teachers' Beliefs about the Impact of Coaching on Practice. The article included data from their 2009 evaluation regarding the effectiveness of the Wyoming IF program. Through their findings, teachers ranked the value of time spent working with IFs. The outcome showed how IFs provide support to elementary teachers was not the same for IFs at the middle and secondary level. While, elementary teachers ranked modelling instructional strategies as a first priority and embedding technology as a low priority in middle and high school the priorities switch and embedding technology becomes a top need, while modelling is a lower priority. These results are shown in Table 1 on the following page.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Value of Time Spent Working with Instructional Facilitators grouped by Elementary, Secondary, and K-12/ Other Teachers

Activity	Elementary N=507		Secondary N=537		K-12/Other N=125	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Provide support in choosing appropriate instructional strategies	4.20	.87	3.95	1.04	4.05	1.01
Provide support in developing and/or using appropriate formative assessments	4.06	.98	3.85	1.11	3.93	1.02
Assist in maintaining a supportive classroom environment	4.09	1.01	3.81	1.14	3.85	1.14
Coach me in my classroom	4.05	1.05	3.64	1.23	3.70	1.22
Model effective instructional strategies	4.23	.92	3.78	1.19	3.91	1.09
Provide oral or written feedback	4.11	.99	3.90	1.14	3.93	1.13
Review with me the effectiveness of modeling or coaching	3.95	1.03	3.66	1.25	3.68	1.18
Participate in collaborative meetings	4.12	.96	3.86	1.13	3.93	1.11
Help me to use student achievement data	4.23	.90	3.82	1.13	3.89	1.01
Help me identify student needs for instructional focus	4.26	.89	3.80	1.18	4.09	1.00
Support me in embedding technology in instruction	4.06	1.00	4.05	1.08	3.97	1.01
Facilitate a cohort study group	3.89	1.02	3.67	1.20	3.65	1.22
Overall	4.07	.85	3.85	1.00	3.81	1.08

Note: response values range from 1 (complete waste of time) to 5 (excellent use of time)

In spring 2015, the WDE asked school districts to complete an online survey regarding the Instructional Facilitator Program. The 74-question survey was divided into three grade-level configurations: elementary, middle school/junior high, and high school. The person completing the survey was selected in-district based on their “knowledge and oversight of the district IF program.” Additional personnel such as principals, IFs, and other stakeholders were encouraged also participate in the survey. Fifty-five (55) respondents from 47 districts answered questions regarding the administration of the IF program in their district.

As part of the survey, respondents are asked to report IFs top three primary roles relating to providing assistance to teachers. Based on collected data, districts reported IF roles differ at each grade band, echoing Rush and Young’s 2009 findings. Again, modeling instructional strategies in elementary schools was indicated as a top priority 46.2% of the time, at the secondary level IFs assisted 17.4% of the time. Where at the secondary level, embedding technology occurs in 37% of IFs time, at the elementary level IFs time is utilized 17.3%. IFs primary roles based on grade-level configuration, can be viewed in figures 1a, 2a, and 3a on the following page.

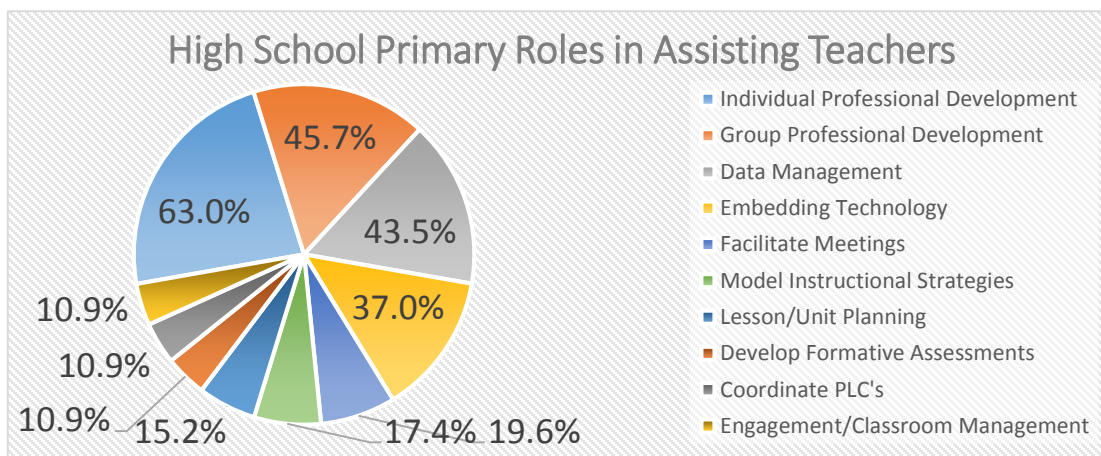


Figure 1a.

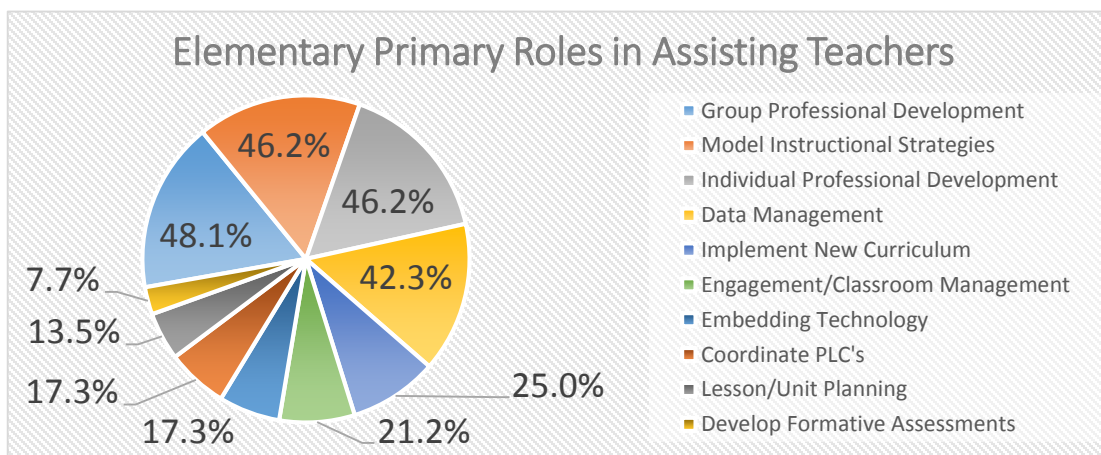


Figure 2a.

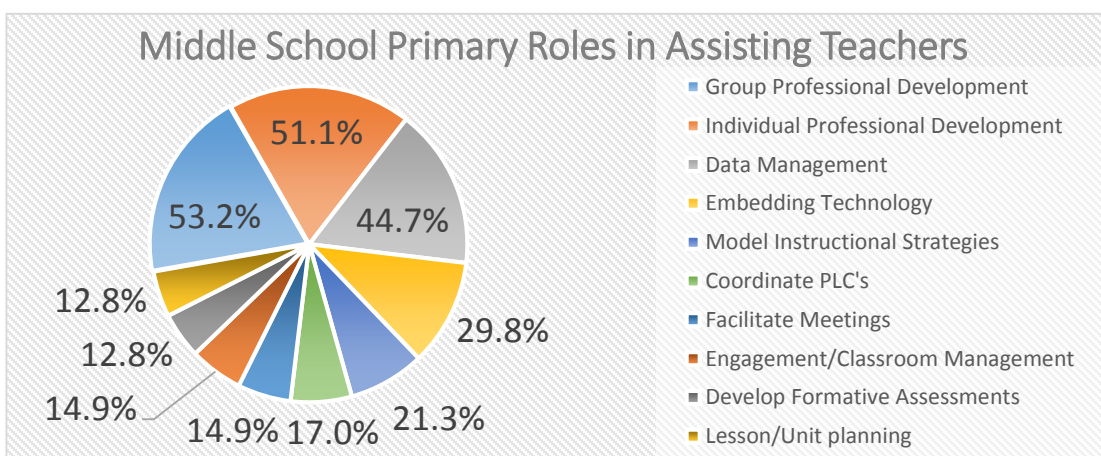


Figure 3a.

Through the survey, most districts indicated appropriate utilization of IF roles; however, two (2) districts reported using IFs in a manner that does not meet program requirements. These districts used IFs for assessment administration and managing additional duty programs.

Although districts are properly utilizing IFs roles overall, some districts struggle providing mentorship due to their low ADM. Rush and Young (2011) reported, “Thus, it appears that the Instructional Facilitators have heavy workloads, and most teachers may only be receiving minimum benefit” (p. 20). Districts, through the survey, echoed these concerns:

“With our low ADM it is difficult to utilize a fractionalized IF.”

“The IF time for elementary was decreased from 1 FTE to .5 FTE this school year.”

“Funding the position so it is more effective. Fractionalized IF is difficult to utilize.”

The allotment of FTEs funded compared to FTEs utilized, can be seen in Appendix 1.

Because funding for Instructional Facilitators is not fully resourced through the categorical grant, schools may choose to utilize other sources of funding each year to continue supporting these positions. In 2014-15, all 46 participating districts funded at least a portion of their IFs through federal, state, and other sources outside of the IF grant. If the state decides to increase funding from 60% to 100% for the IF program, all allocated funds from the IF grant would need to be spent in full before any federal funding could be applied in order to avoid supplanting issues.

The allotment of disbursed funds compared to funds utilized can be seen in Appendix 2.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Develop a new, online application system to verify IF staff meet the minimum qualifications, beginning with the 2016-17 application process.
- Add an additional step of verifying final staffing list prior to release of funds beginning August 2016.
- Develop a more granular level of reporting funding sources to ensure proper use of funds; WDE will train districts on change in reporting methods beginning fall 2016.
- Recommend three full cycles for new processes to impact IF program and revisit during next recalculation cycle.
- Note: If the IF funding model became part of the block grant rather than remaining as a categorical grant, the IF program and all related expenditures could be difficult to monitor. Thus, the first three recommendations would need to be revisited.

Appendix 1

Year	District	FTE Allocated	FTE Utilized	Difference	Year	District	FTE Allocated	FTE Utilized	Difference
2013-14	Albany #1	10.38	16	5.62	2013-14	Lincoln #1	1.75	2	0.25
2013-14	Big Horn #1	2.63	3	0.37	2013-14	Lincoln #2	7.71	8	0.29
2013-14	Big Horn #2	2.07	1	-1.07	2013-14	Natrona #1	37	33	-4.00
2013-14	Big Horn #3	1.48	2	0.52	2013-14	Niobrara #1	2.72	4	1.28
2013-14	Big Horn #4	0.84	2	1.16	2013-14	Park #1	5.03	6	0.97
2013-14	Campbell #1	25.36	20	-5.36	2013-14	Park #6	6.42	6	-0.42
2013-14	Carbon #1	5.3	5	-0.30	2013-14	Park #16	0.34	1	0.66
2013-14	Carbon #2	1.78	2	0.22	2013-14	Platte #1	2.81	3	0.19
2013-14	Converse #1	5.04	6	0.96	2013-14	Platte #2	0.53	2	1.47
2013-14	Converse #2	2.05	1	-1.05	2013-14	Sheridan #1	2.75	3	0.25
2013-14	Crook #1	3.19	0	-3.19	2013-14	Sheridan #2	9.6	21	11.40
2013-14	Fremont #1	4.98	8	3.02	2013-14	Sheridan #3	0	0	0.00
2013-14	Fremont #2	0.38	1	0.62	2013-14	Sublette #1	3	4	1.00
2013-14	Fremont #6	1.13	3	1.87	2013-14	Sublette #9	1.92	2	0.08
2013-14	Fremont #14	1.85	4	2.15	2013-14	Sweetwater #1	15.96	14	-1.96
2013-14	Fremont #21	1.49	2	0.51	2013-14	Sweetwater #2	7.85	7	-0.85
2013-14	Fremont #24	1.01	3	1.99	2013-14	Teton #1	7.11	9	1.89
2013-14	Fremont #25	7.64	11	3.36	2013-14	Uinta #1	8.41	10	1.59
2013-14	Fremont #38	1.03	1	-0.03	2013-14	Uinta #4	2.35	5	2.65
2013-14	Goshen #1	5.15	6	0.85	2013-14	Uinta #6	2.18	4	1.82
2013-14	Hot Springs #1	1.94	3	1.06	2013-14	Washakie #1	4.16	5	0.84
2013-14	Johnson #1	3.84	3	-0.84	2013-14	Washakie #2	0.31	1	0.69
2013-14	Laramie #1	40.03	44	3.97	2013-14	Weston #1	2.38	3	0.62
2013-14	Laramie #2	2.84	4	1.16	2013-14	Weston #7	0.77	1	0.23

Appendix 2

Year	District	Funds Allocated	Funds Utilized	Difference
2013-14	Albany #1	760,063.00	760,062.75	-
2013-14	Big Horn #1	185,822.00	185,821.58	-
2013-14	Big Horn #2	153,843.00	125,444.09	(28,399.00)
2013-14	Big Horn #3	112,229.00	112,228.90	-
2013-14	Big Horn #4	65,588.00	65,607.05	19.00
2013-14	Campbell #1	1,995,040.00	1,995,039.98	-
2013-14	Carbon #1	384,276.00	375,383.20	(8,893.00)
2013-14	Carbon #2	134,796.00	134,795.93	-
2013-14	Converse #1	375,858.00	365,241.96	(10,616.00)
2013-14	Converse #2	154,449.00	93,964.19	(60,485.00)
2013-14	Crook #1	248,618.00	137,048.00	(111,570.00)
2013-14	Fremont #1	382,213.00	382,213.48	-
2013-14	Fremont #2	30,947.00	30,946.84	-
2013-14	Fremont #6	85,231.00	83,954.27	(1,277.00)
2013-14	Fremont #14	131,169.00	9,757.09	(121,412.00)
2013-14	Fremont #21	114,242.00	114,241.77	-
2013-14	Fremont #24	71,444.00	77,141.92	5,698.00
2013-14	Fremont #25	573,702.00	573,702.00	-
2013-14	Fremont #38	75,870.00	75,870.31	-
2013-14	Goshen #1	392,597.00	435,759.35	43,162.00
2013-14	Hot Springs #1	144,827.00	139,046.00	(5,781.00)
2013-14	Johnson #1	290,300.00	290,299.70	-
2013-14	Laramie #1	3,188,227.00	3,122,451.30	(65,776.00)
2013-14	Laramie #2	210,184.00	216,000.17	5,816.00
2013-14	Lincoln #1	130,001.00	120,105.09	(9,896.00)

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Year	District	Funds Allocated	Funds Utilized	Difference
2013-14	Lincoln #2	582,201.00	576,768.00	(5,433.00)
2013-14	Natrona #1	2,835,651.00	2,555,639.36	(280,012.00)
2013-14	Niobrara #1	156,047.00	156,791.49	744.00
2013-14	Park #1	391,872.00	557,370.41	165,498.00
2013-14	Park #6	517,408.00	482,796.93	(34,611.00)
2013-14	Park #16	24,894.00	21,268.73	(3,625.00)
2013-14	Platte #1	218,557.00	218,556.62	-
2013-14	Platte #2	40,568.00	40,568.00	-
2013-14	Sheridan #1	218,332.00	254,074.47	35,742.00
2013-14	Sheridan #2	752,949.00	752,948.50	-
2013-14	Sheridan #3	-	-	-
2013-14	Sublette #1	246,199.00	332,407.20	86,208.00
2013-14	Sublette #9	161,454.00	327,772.73	166,319.00
2013-14	Sweetwater #1	1,195,547.00	1,132,380.20	(63,167.00)
2013-14	Sweetwater #2	605,782.00	572,407.27	(33,375.00)
2013-14	Teton #1	665,610.00	550,800.38	(114,810.00)
2013-14	Uinta #1	638,182.00	638,182.00	-
2013-14	Uinta #4	175,071.00	175,070.73	-
2013-14	Uinta #6	167,265.00	170,258.72	2,994.00
2013-14	Washakie #1	324,567.00	320,260.06	(4,307.00)
2013-14	Washakie #2	20,867.00	20,878.00	11.00
2013-14	Weston #1	178,164.00	178,164.02	-
2013-14	Weston #7	59,342.00	60,341.55	1,000.00